Writing Effective Email
A Workshop for International Students

Angelo Pitillo
August 30, 2019
B0560 Blau Hall
Agenda

- Email Style
- Your email goals, your email identity
- Making a positive impression
- Politeness Strategies
- Email details: subject lines, greetings, closings
- Cover letter emails
- Thank you emails
- Summary/Takeaways
- Questions
Email Style

- What features of email are more like speech?

- What features are more like writing?
What are your goals for your own academic or professional email?
What does your email address say about you?
The bottom line:

Email is a key way we create a (positive) first impression.
Do you have any like opportunities for research in Ann Arbor during the Summer?

Sincerely,
[Omitted email signature]
Task One: Making a Positive Impression

- How effective is the message, and why? (p. 3)
- Discuss with a partner
Conversational Cooperation Principles

- **Quantity**: Include the right amount of information
- **Relation**: Exclude irrelevant information
- **Manner**: Be unambiguous, clear, brief, and orderly
- **Quality**: Tell the truth

---

Task One Revisited

- How well does the message in Marin Fuhrman’s email in Task One follow these rules of conversational cooperation?
Politeness Strategies¹

- **Tact**: Don’t ask too much.
- **Generosity**: Don’t focus on *you*.
- **Sympathy**: Don’t *annoy* people!

Politeness Strategies Work!

“…when making a special request of instructors, the use of politeness strategies does, in fact, influence instructors' levels of affect toward students. In addition, our results suggest that when instructors have higher positive affect toward students, they are more motivated to work with students and have higher perceptions of students' competence and potential for success in their classrooms.”

1Bolkan, S. & Holmgren, J. L. (2012). You are such a great teacher and I hate to bother you but...": Instructors' perceptions of students and their use of email messages with varying politeness strategies, Communication Education, 61:3, 253-270, DOI: 10.1080/03634523.2012.667135.
Task Two

- Find the politeness strategies in Katie Armstrong’s message.
The Details

- Subject Lines
- Greetings
- Closings

↔ Purpose
Task Three

- Subject Lines
- Greetings
- Closings
Additional Language for Polite Requests

- Modals
- “I was wondering whether...”
- What else can we add to this list?
Task Four: Job Search Cover Email

- What info would you include in an email cover letter to apply for an internship?
Task Five: Thank-You Emails

- What do you like about this template?
- What changes would you suggest?

Thank you.
Task Six: Thank-You Emails cont.

- What is your reaction to the first email?
- How effective is the second one?
Summary

- What are your key takeaways from today’s workshop?
Questions?
Thank You
Workshop Evaluation

- Your feedback is valuable to us and will help us improve the experience of future participants. Thank you!

bit.ly/umicorIENTATION